

COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: August 6, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: CHRIS GOBBI CHAIR, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY

SUBJECT: Pedestrian Accommodation in Work Zones

ATTACHMENTS: None

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council DIRECTS Administration to review existing City policies, procedures, and permitting processes regarding accessibility of safe pedestrian access to the pedestrian network in work zones to ensure the City aligns with best practices in promoting pedestrian safety and accommodation in work zones.

PURPOSE:

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility was created to “advise Mayor and Council and City Staff on the identification, removal and prevention of physical and social barriers which impede the full participation of all citizens in every aspects of community life.” One such physical barrier that has become increasingly common is that of pedestrian sidewalk obstructions resulting from adjacent construction zones.

When existing pedestrian networks are disrupted, closed, or relocated in a construction zone or location where temporary traffic controls are in place, the design of that disruption will provide for advance pedestrian information including transition information, ingress and egress directions for pedestrians, and consideration for pedestrians with a variety of disabilities (i.e.: mobility, vision, hearing, cognitive).

Sign Placement

Signs warning of a sidewalk closure and detour are placed at intersections rather than mid-block locations. See below for some examples collected by committee members over the past few months.

Advance Notification

The City’s News and Notices subscriptions services allows members of the public to subscribe to notification of traffic disruptions. This notification must not only address vehicle traffic disruptions but also pedestrian traffic disruptions. By providing advance notice of sidewalk closures, members of the public who rely on public transportation and walking will be able to better plan their route detours, if necessary.

Accessible Route Alternatives

Where detour routes are available, consideration must be provided to ensure:

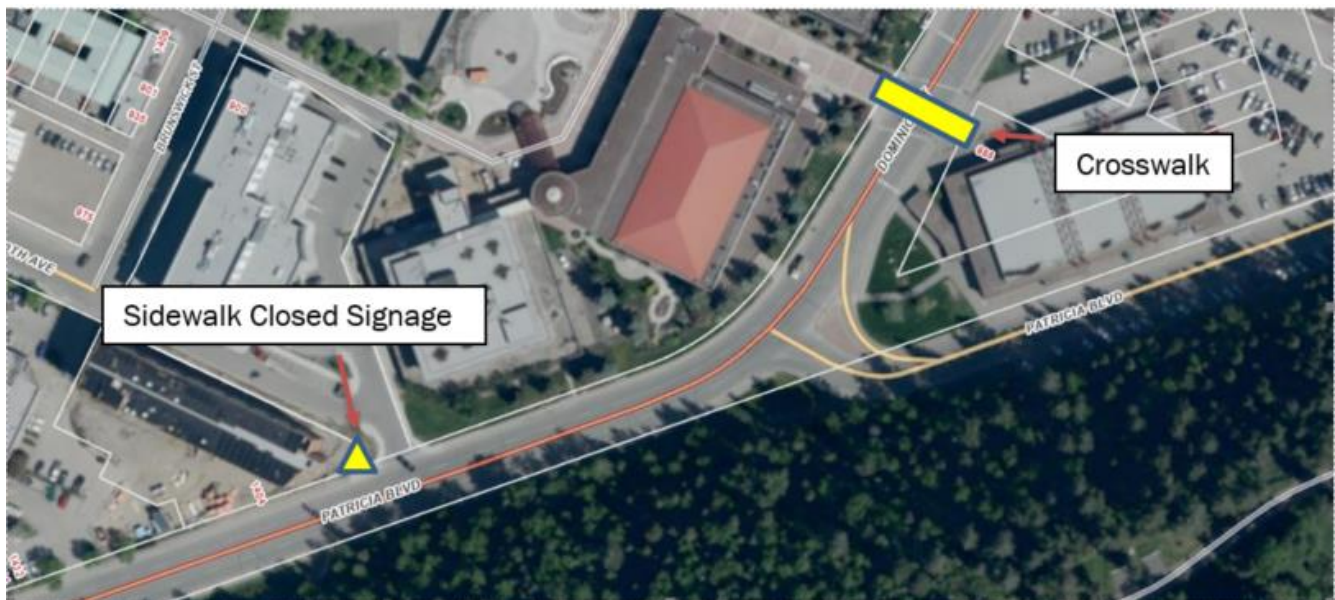
- detour routes are accessible, detectable, and clearly communicated by signs;
- routes are accessible to mobility devices through the installation/availability of curb cuts on the ingress and egress of that detour;
- routes provide pathways of movement that separates pedestrians from vehicle traffic;
- the detour route should be of similar length to the original pedestrian route;
- covered walkways should be provided, where needed, to protect pedestrians from falling debris;
- alternate routes maintains access to existing transit stops and/or the relocated transit stop with an accessible pathway to those relocated stops; and
- barricades are detectable by a cane, continuous, stable, and non-flexible.

The following are examples noted by the Committee:

In the photos below, signage notifying of the sidewalk closure is placed mid-block along Patricia Boulevard with no provision of a safe pedestrian crossing to either the sidewalk on the other side of the street or around the closure on the road.



The sidewalk closed signage is placed outside of the sightline from the nearest marked crosswalk on Dominion.



In the following example, pedestrian signage was done well. Signs notifying vehicular and pedestrian traffic of upcoming construction was given at the crosswalk immediately preceding the sidewalk closure allowing pedestrians opportunity to safely cross 15th Avenue at a marked pedestrian crossing.

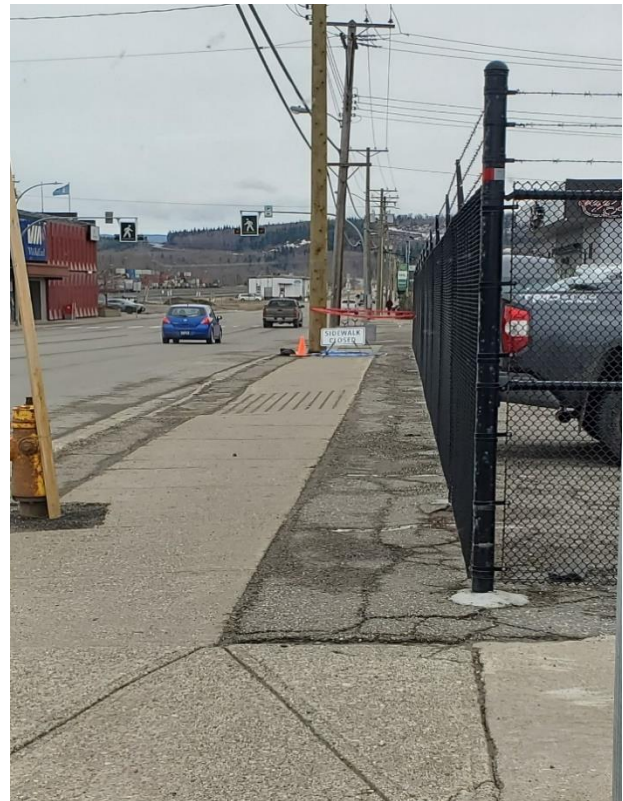


The photos below show a sidewalk in the midst of repair at 5th and Douglas. The sidewalk remains open with a substrate that could pose as a tripping hazard to the visually impaired and no safe alternative around the impacted walkway. The photo to the right is the nearest pedestrian crossing (from which the closure is not visible) (5th and Gillette) for pedestrians travelling along 5th Avenue towards Carney Street.



Both of the two photos below show sidewalks marked as closed with no safe alternate route provided for pedestrians. In either case, the pedestrian must leave the sidewalk and walk with the vehicular traffic around the closed sidewalk.

Further, the photo on the left offers no curb cut for use by a pedestrian using a mobility device. The result is the pedestrian must backtrack to the next nearest curb cut to be able to leave the sidewalk.



Accessibility standards vary across the country with provinces such as Ontario with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, an act that addresses requirements and standards in a variety of areas including accessible exterior paths of travel. Accessibility legislation is coming to British Columbia with a framework already in place. The Advisory Committee on Accessibility extends its availability to Council and City Staff to discuss the many ways in which the City of Prince George could lead the charge on making its community truly accessible.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The committee recommends that Council directs administration to review the City's existing policy and procedures regarding the signing and provision of safe detours for pedestrians in work zones to ensure they align with best practices and safely accommodates all pedestrians.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Chris Gobbi, Chair
Advisory Committee on Accessibility

Meeting Date: 2021/08/16